

Message Text

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21

ACTION ARA-20

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R 112127Z SEP 74

FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3678

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR BH

SUBJECT: PREMIER'S ANNUAL NATIONAL DAY ADDRESS

1. PREMIER GEORGE PRICE ADDRESSED THE COUNTRY ON SEPTEMBER 10 IN HIS ANNUAL NATIONAL DAY SPEECH. ATTENDING THE CEREMONY WERE THE USUAL SELECTION OF POLITICIANS, BUSINESSMEN, MEMBERS OF THE CONSULAR CORPS AND OTHER FAITHFUL PUP SPEARBEARERS AS WELL AS THE GOVERNOR. IN A WELL THOUGHT OUT AND OFTEN ELOQUENT SPEECH, PRICE SQUARELY FACED THE INDEPENDENCE ISSUE.

2. PRICE POINTED OUT THAT BELIZEANS ARE A SEPARATE, EVEN UNIQUE, PEOPLE IN THE AMERICAS WITH THEIR OWN CULTURE, GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY. HE SAID THAT COLONIALISM IS MORALLY INDEFENSIBLE AT THIS JUNCTURE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND THAT BELIZE WAS NOW READY FOR THE FINAL CONSTITUTIONAL STEP OF INDEPENDENCE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE "NEGATIVE FORCES" IMPEDING THIS LAST STEP WHICH CLAIM THE ENTIRE TERRITORY. THESE NEGATIVE FORCES, GUATEMALA HE POINTED OUT, CLAIM THAT THEY ARE RESISTING COLONIALISM AND THAT ALLOWING BELIZE INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE SUCCESSION FROM THE STATE. PRICE REJECTED THESE CLAIMS OUTRIGHT SAYING THAT GUATEMALA HAD NEVER GOVERNED IN BELIZE AND THAT MANY STATES IN THE AMERICAS ARE THE RESULT OF SUCCESSION.

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3. PRICE WENT ON TO ASK THE GOVERNOR TO EXPRESS TO THE QUEEN BELIZE'S GRATITUDE FOR THE ASSISTANCE BRITAIN IS CONTRIBUTING TO BELIZEAN DEVELOPMENT. HE ALSO ASKED THE GOVERNOR TO REMIND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OF ITS "SACRED DUTY" TO THE BELIZEAN PEOPLE AND TO THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER IN OBTAINING A SECURE INDEPENDENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

4. COMMENT: THE SPEECH WAS BRIEF, TWENTY MINUTES, AND IMPRESSIVE. HE ADDRESSED HIMSELF AS MUCH TO THE GOVERNOR AS HE DID TO THE BELIZEAN PEOPLE. HE SAID, IN EFFECT, "BY OURSELVES WE CANNOT ACHIEVE REAL INDEPENDENCE. WE CAN ONLY DO SO WITH YOUR HELP, AND WE DEMAND THAT HELP." THIS WAS GEORGE PRICE AT HIS MOST ELOQUENT, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SHOWING HIS STRONG PRACTICAL GRASP OF REAL POLITICS. UNLESS PRICE IS A GENIUS AT QUIET INTRIGUE, IT APPEARS THAT HE HAS REJECTED ANY IDEAS OF UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE. WHETHER OR NOT HMG DECIDES TO GIVE BELIZE ANY HIGHER PRIORITY REMAINS TO BE SEEN. DRISCOLL

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